

991229-023



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

73286

January 18, 2000

The Honorable Bill Frist
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

OST-99-6410-48

Dear Senator Frist:

Thank you for your letter of December 8, 1999, enclosing copies of correspondence from constituents of yours who are owners of travel agencies. The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) has recently filed a formal complaint (Docket OST-99-6410) with this Department against a number of airlines. ASTA alleges that in cutting the commissions that they pay travel agents, the airlines are engaging in unfair practices and unfair methods of competition in violation of 49 U.S.C. §41712, and your constituents agree.

The airlines filed their responses to ASTA's complaint on December 10. It is now up to our Enforcement Office to review the complaint and responses and determine whether, under our statute, the complaint should be pursued or dismissed. Under these circumstances, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the substance of your constituents' letters. Your staff and your constituents can track the pleadings as well as the Department's actions through our Dockets web site at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Clicking on "search" and then typing "6410" in the space for the docket number and again clicking on "search" will bring up a list of all documents in the docket. Each item can be opened.

The Department's *ex parte* rules, 14 CFR Part 300, require that I place your letter, your constituents' letters, and a copy of this reply in Docket OST-99-6410.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rodney E. Slater', is written over the typed name.
Rodney E. Slater

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
RECEIVED
00 FEB 29 PM 4:50

BILL FRIST
TENNESSEE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON,, DC 20510

December 8, 1999

The Honorable Rodney Slater
400 Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
400 7th Street, SW
Room 10205
Washington, D.C. 20590

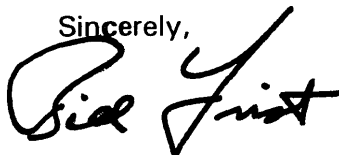
Dear Secretary Slater:

Enclosed you will find copies of letters to me from several of my constituents. I believe the Department of Transportation will be able to address their concerns in a timely and helpful manner.

I would appreciate it if you would send me a copy of your correspondence for my files. Thank you so much for giving these concerns full and fair consideration.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,



Bill Frist, M.D.
United States Senator

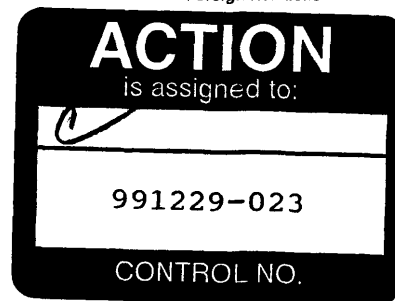
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Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Foreign Relations



WHF\knh



P.O. Box 1353 • 320 E. Main St. • Murfreesboro, Tn. 37130 • (615) 895-1001

L307785

November 10, 1999

The Honorable Bill Frist
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

Please save my business from airline unfair competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost Squeeze" that drives up agents' costs with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or my trade association, ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Waverly Fisher
Manager, Town & Country Travel



L310342

Knoxville Tours & Travel Center



Joan D. Lusk, Owner/President

November 17, 1999

The Honorable Bill Frist
U.S. senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

Please save my business from airline unfair competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent compensation below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that d&es up agents' costs with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business continues to provide consumers with the last best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advise about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, consumers will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me or my trade association, ASTA, of your action.

We sincerely look forward to hearing from you very soon!

Sincerely;
Stewart Lusk
Stewart Lusk
Vice President

L309832

323 Hancock Street
Gallatin, TN 37066
615-452-9062-Fax
615-451-3300-Agency

Tennessee Travel, World Traveler, Inc.

November 16, 1999

Senator Fred Thompson
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Thompson,

Please save my business from airline unfair competition by writing to the Secretary of Transportation and ask him to act favorably upon the American Society of Travel Agents' (ASTA) complaint against airline unfair practices.

ASTA's filing request the Secretary to use his authority to stop the unfair methods of competition the airlines are using to force travel agencies out of business. The airlines have driven travel agent commissions below the cost of doing business, while also creating a "cost squeeze" that drives up ticket costs with unnecessary and anticompetitive restrictions.

My small business in Gallatin continues to provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options. If the airlines succeed, the consumer will pay more. On behalf of my clients and employees, we thank you for contacting the Secretary and notifying me, at the above numbers, or my trade association, ASTA, at 703-739-6842 of your action.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Becky E. Roy
Becky E. Roy, CTC
Owner/Manager

L307793

Author: Debidest@aol.com at Internet

Date: 11/11/1999 3:05 PM

Normal

CC: senator frist at Frist-DC

TO: senator_thompson@thompson.senate.gov at internet

Subject: ASTA and the airlines

----- Message Contents

Dear Senator,

I would like to request your support of your constituents who are travel agents. The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) has lodged a complaint against airline unfair practices, and I would like you to write the Secretary of Transportation with a recommendation to support this complaint.

ASTA's filing requests the Secretary to stop the questionable methods of competition the airlines are using. My (very) small business in Gatlinburg tries to provide our clients with neutral advice about airlines and their products. Many people in East Tennessee must scrape together their pennies in order to travel. If the airlines succeed with their anti-competitive actions, consumers will pay more.

On behalf of my clients, as well as myself and my employees, I would appreciate your efforts in contacting the Secretary on this issue.

Thank you.

Debi Cason

Owner/Manager

Destinations Unlimited

315 River Rd.

Gatlinburg, TN 37738

423-430-1920

423-436-5478 (fax)

debidest@aol.com